

# 2019 Santana Adventures

## GPS Buying and Endorsed Unit Guide; Knowledge Base

If you are a first time Santana Adventures guest, please read this document carefully. There is important information regarding on-road navigation for your upcoming Santana Adventures Tour. There is a lot to digest but please take this to heart. Our goal is for you to have the best adventure possible, and spending some time understanding how our system works will help achieve that goal. “It’s too long I’m not going to read this” will lead to frustration.

### What you will find here:

- Why GPS?
- Why Garmin?
- FAQ’s
- How GPS guidance works on the tour
- Why no phone
- How do I decide what to buy?
- Endorsed legacy models
- Endorsed current models
- Buying Resources



### Why GPS?

At Santana we always strived to be the leader and innovator of building the best bikes and offering rewarding cycling tours. Now that our travel side of the business has evolved into Santana Adventures we continue to bring innovation to bike travel creating unique adventures by exclusively using e-navigation. We first introduced GPS guidance on tours in 2009. At that time no one else was using GPS on tours and learning curves were steep. We latched onto e-navigation because we could see the clear advantages over cue sheets and paper maps. This has allowed us to create the best rides that you can follow with confidence in lands where there may be no intelligible road signs, or worse yet no direction at all. After finding and hiring the right consultant (who spent long hours working with Garmin’s hardware and software engineers) we achieved success during Santana’s 2010 Barcelona-to-Lisbon Tour; by 2012 we worked out most of the challenges and increased the positives to over 98%. Today over 2000 Santana Adventures participants have relied on our GPS routing while participating in our events on five continents. **I GUARANTEE you’ll love the experience of GPS routing.**

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### Why Garmin?

Garmin was chosen for the following five reasons:

1. Garmin devices are PC and Mac friendly.
2. Except for the long wait, Garmin's free phone support is excellent.
3. In addition to bike-specific "Edge" units, Garmin offers "outdoor" units with bike-specific options (handlebar mounts plus cadence & heart-rate sensors).
4. The endorsed Garmin units all support external memory cards.
5. Garmin supports our sport (road and off-road)

### FAQ's that always arise before a tour:

- 1) **Will there be cue sheets/maps? No, all rides will be GPS guided; you will need a GPS unit.** A route/cue sheet, unlike a GPS, can't confirm if you're on or off course. Even if you're off course and hopelessly lost, reporting your GPS's coordinates to an emergency responder allows a paramedic or our SOS van to arrive without delay. This can be a lifesaver!
- 2) "I really like my Magellan/Wahoo/Polar/TomTom/PucciManeuli bike GPS..." Great! While these may be incredible units for workouts and single day club rides, **without exception there have always been issues (read failures) whenever someone tries to use these other units on a Santana Adventures tour.** Yes, the Garmins have idiosyncrasies too, but they are the most reliable at getting you from Point "A to B."

- 3) "I have a Map My Ride / Ride with GPS" account and the phone app is AWESOME! Can I just load the rides on my iPhone/Android and use that? Well... yes and no; we agree the phone apps, especially "Ride with GPS," works very well but there are many reasons not to go this way on a trip thousands of miles from home with potentially unreliable cell connectivity, limited battery life and risking weather damage to your phone. **Going this route is a fail.**



- 4) **"Can I use my portable automotive GPS?" DO NOT bring GPS units designed for cars and motorcycles (including Garmin's "Drives" (formerly Nuvi) and "Zumo" models) are purposefully engineered to reject any course that can't be navigated by a small truck or RV. For Santana Adventures' tours, all automotive GPS units are 100% FAIL!**
- 5) **If you chose to bring a unit other than the GPS units we recommend you are on**

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**your own to figure out how to get from point A to B.** This may cause you to miss a ship departure, which is apt to be twice as expensive as a new GPS.

- 6) "I've **never** used a GPS unit and I'm frightened of the prospect." Don't worry we'll send you a "how to guide" before your tour and will also provide coaching sessions before your first ride.

### Navigating by bike mounted GPS

Navigating your daily ride with your bike-mounted-GPS is simpler than plugging in an address on your car-based unit. Once you turn on the unit, you'll locate the day's ride, select it, and off you go following "the pink line" to your next destination. But wait, "how do I get that information into my GPS unit?" Not a problem, we provide a preloaded memory card at the start of your trip that has everything you need on the card (maps and rides); it's truly a plug and play system.

### But I have a Cell phone and "Ride with GPS..."



"Why can't I use my phone it can..." **DO NOT use your Smartphone!** Smartphones are amazing devices and while there are phone apps that will interpret Santana's routes faithfully, a problem arises **when** routes need to be revised during a tour. Because there is often limited internet access on most tours, smartphones are precluded from getting ride updates in a timely fashion. Those that have followed this path against our advice have without exception been disappointed. Additionally, most phones that support GPS aren't durable or waterproof. People who try to use their iPhone, for instance, will trash their \$600+ investment when they need to

navigate their way through an unexpected rainstorm or a phone mount comes loose. Lastly, when used as a GPS, a smartphone's battery can be drained in a couple of hours.

### Which Garmin unit should I get?

- 1) **I like to keep it simple:** Remember back in the day when you planned a road trip and went to AAA, and an agent helped you figure out the best way to get to your destination with map and highlighter pen? Simple, you followed the line provided on the map; you might have strayed once in a while but as long as you got yourself back on the

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highlighted line you would get to your destination. This is how all outdoor oriented GPS units work. They provide you guidance with a highlighted line and you follow it. If you get off the path use the underlying map to get yourself back on track. (units: Montana, Oregon, eTrex models)

- 2) **I need lots of encouragement:** I need to see call outs, text messages and hear beeps, bells and buzzes so I know when to turn and also want to be nagged with beeps, bells and buzzes when I get off route so I don't ride into the Mediterranean – Atlantic – Danube – South-China-Sea. (units: all endorsed Edge models)

All kidding aside we like the simple, less complicated outdoor units. Historically they have had the fewest issues but we do understand that some people need more cuing than others and the Edge units will provide that additional feedback. One caveat here, the Garmin Edges are much more temperamental (fussy) and setting them up correctly is extremely important otherwise you may have a different adventure than the rest of your traveling companions.

### **Endorsed Garmin Legacy (discontinued) Models:**

**Edge 800:** Still works but it is probably time to update. Battery life is a concern.

**Edge 810:** Outside of the new 1030 this is still the best bike-based unit.

**Edge 1000:** Recently dethroned flagship model. They are still out there, and you can probably get one cheap but be forewarned they are still buggy.

**Edge Tour and Tour+:** Garmin's simplest bike-based computers, old but still reliable.

**Dakota 20:** This one dates back to the Pleistocene Era but it still works; small and dim screen compared to current models.

**Oregon:** Any version. Units older than the 500 series have dim screens compared to current offerings.

**Montana:** Any version

**Don't see your unit listed here? It's time for a new GPS. Using a brand other than Garmin? It's a nonstarter for a Santana Adventures tour.**

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### 2019 Buying Guide, Currently Endorsed models from Garmin:

#### Outdoor/Hiking Models:

**eTrex:** We endorse the 20x and 30x. These are the most basic (non-touchscreen) of the outdoor units offering buttons and a joystick for getting around your navigation screens and selecting options. The screen is smallish which can make them challenging to see for those of us over 20 years of age. Garmin lists these at \$199 and \$299 respectively. The 30x offers an independent electronic compass, barometric altimeter and wireless data transfer capabilities (Garmin proprietary protocol). REI currently sells only the eTrex 20x, price \$180. GPS City has both the 20x and 30x for \$169.95 and \$199.95 respectively.

**eTrex Touch:** Upscale touchscreen version of the 20x and 30x models. Easy to program and use like the Oregons (see below) but with a smaller screen. There is a eTrex Touch 25 and 35, the difference between the two units are the 35 offers a barometric altimeter and live tracking through Garmin's phone app "Garmin Connect." There is also a "t" version available, which includes US topo maps. List prices range from \$249.99-349.99. Currently you can get them from Garmin or GPS City (\$219.95-259.95).

**Oregon:** The 700 series is the current flagship touchscreen in Garmin's Outdoor line. The Oregon has a fairly large screen and its form factor makes it ideal to mount on a bicycle. The touchscreen scheme is relatively easy to use (similar to your smartphone), both to program and operate. **This is our favorite unit.** The "t" versions include US topo maps. The base model (Oregon 700) lists for \$399. As of this writing you can get one from GPS City for \$339. REI is only carrying the 750t (most deluxe version), and that runs \$500.

**Montana:** This is the largest of the Garmin's that can be reasonably mounted to bicycle. It is the ultimate hybrid unit. They sport a large touch screen that is easy to see but as mentioned it is a bit beastly to mount on bicycle. If you are looking for something to use in the car as well as on your bike take a close look at this one. The current Montana comes in two flavors, a 610 and a 680. The difference is an 8-megapixel camera. There is also a "t" variation which throws in 100K topo maps for the US. List price(s) \$499-599. REI currently does not stock these models but you can get them from GPS City for \$375.95-459.95.

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### Dedicated Cycling Units:

Because Garmin has been moving away from providing memory card slots to a less versatile cloud base (at least for our purposes), there are only two bike-centric units in the current marketplace that meet Santana Adventures' needs.

**Edge Explore 1000:** Not to be confused with the Edge Explore, this unit is still available for purchase through Garmin's website for \$450. This version of the Explore supports memory cards, the latest version (Edge Explore) does not. In our opinion if you are looking for a cycling specific unit without all of the fitness/training bells and whistles, the Explore 1000 is the best unit for Santana Adventures Tours. This Edge model has a large screen and is simple to program and operate. Your biggest challenge might be obtaining one if you wait too long.

**Edge 1030:** Current flagship in Garmin's bike line does everything you could ever want for training and navigation on a bicycle. The downside is if you aren't a hardcore bike geek you will only be using about 2% of this unit's capabilities on a Santana Adventures tour. List price starts at \$600. If you choose to get the bundle (cadence and heart rate accessories included) the price is \$700. At this point in time this is the going rate regardless of who you buy this from.

### Resources

Where do I start? The best answer is go to a reputable dealer. We like GPS City ([www.gpscocity.com](http://www.gpscocity.com)) and REI ([www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)). While you might find some of these units for less elsewhere both listed retailers can provide solid additional advice, and both offer customer-oriented return policies. Of course, if you are alright with paying top dollar you can also buy direct from Garmin. If you are looking for cycling units, your favorite bike shop will probably have these in stock but beware of the youthful bike racer upselling you to the best model for racing or fitness. Remember the criteria we have presented and stick to it. As tour time approaches we will send out a complete setup guide that covers all endorsed Garmin GPS units, and as mentioned, we will also have coaching sessions at the beginning of your tour if you are not completely comfortable with operating your unit.

Any questions? Please contact our Garmin/GPS guru Gene Mezereny:  
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